

The Tambourine Factory
Would Like To
Remind You:

"What is Not Dead
which can Eternal Lie
And with Strange Aeons
Even death may die"



"There he is," Virgil said as he passed Raymond in the hallway. "How you doin'?"

"Livin' the dream," Raymond replied.

"Heard that."

Later, sitting in his cubicle, waiting between calls, Virgil started thinking.... *Living the dream. So, I'm in Raymond's dream. He is dreaming of me.*

That's not right.

Virgil looked around, checked his desk; his computer. All seemed normal. The office supplies, little personal touches, program applications; everything in it's place. He stood up and looked at his reflection in the playing-card sized mirror affixed to the filing cabinet. Same face.

Raymond is dreaming me the way I am. No changes.

Why?

Virgil sat down, narrowed his eyes, and surreptitiously put a hand on his crotch.

I'm still a dude, then. So, it isn't a sex thing. Or maybe it is. But Raymond isn't gay. Or at least, not when he's not dreaming....

Virgil stood up again, this time craning his neck to look over the tops of the cubical farm until he spotted Raymond.

Raymond, also, was between calls. Sitting with his feet propped up on his desk. Reading a magazine.

Virgil sat back down.

So. Raymond dreams about slacking off at work, reading magazines. Seems like a pretty lame-ass dream, but I shouldn't complain. Since I'm in his stupid dream, at least there are no monsters.

The phone buzzed, and Virgil went back to work.

The next morning, Virgil passed Raymond in the hall again, but this time he avoided making eye contact. Raymond, however, initiated conversation.

"Hey, Virg. How are you?"

"Yeah, fine. And yourself."

"Oh, you know. Livin' the dream."

Goddamnit!

After that, the morning turned awful. The in-coming calls were relentless and every customer he talked to was royally pissed about something. Virgil started hating Raymond.

Fucking dream something better than this, you shit! Dream us onto a beach with female volleyball players or spaceship or something. Christ, what the hell is wrong with you? You can live a dream and this - THIS - is what you choose?

During the lunch break, Virgil found Raymond in the break-room, eating a sandwich and reading a book. He sat next to him. Raymond glanced up, lifted a corner of his mouth in a semi-smile, then continued reading.

Virgil tapped the table with his index finger. He breathed deep and exhaled. He scratched the back of his neck.

"So...", Virgil said. "A sandwich?"

Raymond didn't take his eyes off his book but said, "Yes."

"Mmmm hmmm."

Virgil clucked his tongue.

Time passed. Raymond turned a page.

In an explosion of activity, Virgil slapped the sandwich away from Raymond, tore the book from his hand, and threw it across the room.

"Living the dream!" Virgil yelled in his face. "The DREAM? This is the dream? A fucking sandwich and a goddamned book?"

The other workers sitting at the tables gasped in shock.

"Don't...", Raymond cowered away, pushing his chair back. "Don't start."

"Do me one favor, pal," Virgil kept pushing. "You want to live your dreams? Count me out. I don't want to be part of this nonsense anymore. Christ, you put me in your dreams then give me some shit detail where all I'm doing is answering phones; talking to cunts all day? Oh, fuck you, man. I want out. Understand? I want out of this messed up dream."

"You don't know what you're doing...", Raymond whispered.

"Oh yeah? Well maybe I don't." Virgil hitched his elbow back and made a fist, aiming it right at Raymond's face. "But I do know how to wake up a sleepyhead."

Suddenly, an octopus tentacle appeared mid-air and wrapped itself around Virgil's punching arm. It pulled away, tearing great hunks of flesh, exposing bone.

Virgil screamed in pain.

Raymond hid his face behind his hands, but it didn't help.

The monster attached to the octopus tentacle snapped into existence with a hellish roar. It had dozens of tentacles and all of them lashed out across the expanse of the break-room, snapping at and wrapping up the co-workers. Beneath soulless snake eyes the size of hubcaps, the monster had an oozing, vertical slice for a mouth - very much like a vagina with teeth. The tentacles fed the vagina people.

Virgil lay on the floor at Raymond's feet, cradling his ruined arm. The smell and sounds of the monster as it gobbled up co-workers were horrifying. Virgil whimpered and cried for Raymond, "...stop this... stop it."

"I can't," Raymond said. "This is NOT the dream."

A tentacle reached for Virgil, found his foot, and, with lightning speed, snaked up his leg all the way to his crotch.

With a whoosh and a crunch, Virgil disappeared into the mouth of a monster.

"Hey now," YogSigoth said as he slithered passed Zule entering the eighth level of hell. "How you doin'?"

"You know," Zule replied, rolling over a carpet of human corpses. "Livin' the dream."

"Heard that."